

NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Education

\$900,000 SCHOOL UPGRADE MAKES SURREY STUDENTS SAFER

SURREY – A \$900,000 project to upgrade earthquake resistance at Ellendale elementary school has been approved by the provincial government, Surrey-Tynehead MLA Dave S. Hayer announced today.

"The safety of our students is paramount," said Hayer. "This investment by our government is certainly welcome news for Surrey parents, students and staff."

The seismic upgrades to the school will include reinforcing the walls and roof, and upgrading the foundations in the older sections of the school. The cost includes the installation of portable classrooms to allow classes to continue during construction. The upgrades are expected to take 13 months and are scheduled to be complete by summer 2008.

"It's great to see such an important upgrade getting underway at Ellendale elementary and I appreciate the school community's patience and support during the project work," says Surrey board of education chair Shawn Wilson. "Our board continues to have school seismic upgrades and similar improvements as key priorities."

"Ellendale elementary school is part of this government's \$1.5-billion program to meet current seismic standards in our schools," said Education Minister Shirley Bond. "Our seismic program is the most comprehensive ever by a B.C. government."

The Province has invested over \$151 million in the Surrey school district since 2001, completing 27 capital projects. During the same period, the Province has also invested \$69 million for buses and maintenance projects in the district. Ellendale elementary school is one of nine Surrey schools approved for structural seismic upgrades. One project at Senator Reid elementary is currently under construction, and seismic upgrades at Frank Hurt secondary are now complete.

During the same period, the Province has spent over \$1 billion to complete 26 new schools, 32 replacements, 140 additions and 22 renovations projects across British Columbia. By the end of 2008-09, the Province will have invested more than \$2.8 billion in school capital and maintenance projects.

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